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VILA RECÔNCAVO

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[778] to do with cultism. His parents were strongly opposed to cultism and had told him that it was bad. But the next day the stone was back in his house, frightening him. He again threw it away, and again it reappeared in his house. Then he took it to the cult leader on the plantation, who told him that it was
[782] a sign that he had an obligation to fulfill toward the gods. To put an end to the matter, it was necessary to make certain appeasements in the form of food and drink. So he began to save money, and at the same time took instruction from the woman as to what to do. During this time he became genuinely interested in cultism and became the "most curious"
[428] of the woman's disciples. He studied for many years with her and did as much as he could in the ceremonies. When she died
[765] she left the house to him, as he was the most active among her followers. After he had observed the honorary period of a year after her death and had properly dispatched her saints, he moved into the house where he has now been leader for
[578] thirteen years. Because of jealousies and fights over the inheritance, many of the devotees broke away and went to other houses, taking their saints with them.

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177 Three years after he had taken over the house, he had his first experience with the Indian spirit Seven Stars, who came to him in a dream and let it be known that he wanted to enter the man and become part of the cult. For some time the man resisted, for the cult was traditionally Nagó and the former leader would have had nothing to do with Indian spirits. Seven Stars, however, threatened him with extinction if he did not comply, so in the end he gave in, and one night during a ceremony was possessed by Seven Stars. Everyone liked Seven Stars, because he was a very happy and gay spirit and danced well. After this many other devotees in the house were also possessed by this as well as by one or two other Indian spirits, neither of which, however, was considered as nice as Seven Stars.

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[776] According to dogma, there are twenty-one Indian spirits, although the informant could not name them all and neither could anyone else. All twenty-one live in an aldeia (village) in the woods. There was nothing in the African tradition to tell what preparation was necessary for these spirits, so the entire ritual became one of inventiveness and propitiousness. Nowadays young people who enter the cults are nearly always taken by an Indian spirit and are much pleased, for these spirits involve less expense and much less work. The major com-